

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 28 : NUMBER 1 FEBRUARY 2018



The Cold Wave

Man, it was cold. Not chilly, but COLD! They told us it originated in the Arctic, and why not? Cornwall temperatures did a nosedive about a week before Christmas, spent some nights in the minus-zero range and never got above freezing during daylight hours. The late-December freeze continued into the first week of January, which included a surprise “bomogenesis” snowstorm, then teased us with three days of balmy weather—would you believe 60 degrees one day—only to go back to single digits again.

How did Cornwall get through the brutal weather? Pretty much OK except for the households that ran out of heating fuels, and there were a lot of them, as furnaces worked overtime and oil companies, several of them, couldn't keep up with demands. One major supplier, Bantam Wesson, had fuel but was apparently short of drivers for its delivery trucks. Bantam has been, and remains the provider of choice of the Cornwall Fuel Coop, with a roster of about 80 customers that takes in town and church buildings. The company couldn't keep up with the demand and later apologized to its customers via email.

The firehouse in West Cornwall ran out of heating oil at one point and its members

and the town crew had to deal with jellied diesel that needed special treatment before powering trucks.

Cornwall's heroic town road crew*, led by foreman Jim Vanicky, stayed on top of the situation with its ability to make abundant amounts of sand at the gravel bank off Route 128. According to town hall, we managed to stay on our winter road budget while neighbor villages were already over theirs as they were forced to purchase greater supplies of road salt.

And speaking of Jim Vanicky, he had to use a five-foot chainsaw to break up an ice jam that was clogging a culvert on Lake Road.

The fire department helped out its Kent brothers and sisters with an unprecedented mile-long, 12-foot thick ice jam on the Housatonic River. The jam caused a flooding emergency that closed Route 7 south of the traffic light for days.

All this as another snowstorm swung up the East Coast and hit our hills and dales with eight more inches. —John Miller



*Town Crew roster:
Jim Vanicky, foreman.
Jack Malahan, Buddy
Hurlburt, and Fred
Scoville II.

What Kind of School?

About 55 Cornwall citizens came to the opening round on January 19 of a three-part examination of the future for Cornwall Consolidated School.

Jonathan Costa, assistant executive director of EdAdvance and a seasoned consultant, led what is being called “A Structured Community Conversation” about where CCS stands now and where it might be headed. He set the stage saying, “the decline in enrollment is our point of departure.”

Costa noted that this downward trend is statewide—even region wide across New England—driven by economic and demographic factors. Five years ago, when Costa came to CCS for an earlier consultancy, this trend never came up in discussion. In the five intervening years CCS lost 25 students, reducing the student population to about 75, where it stands today.

Since the school's founding in 1939 enrollment has followed a roller coaster curve.

(continued on page 2)

FEBRUARY 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library; Mat Squad at 6:30 pm UCC; Karate, 6:30–7:30 pm Town Hall; Men's Senior Basketball 6:30–8:30 pm CCS ♦ Tuesdays: Pilates, 8:30–9:30 am Library; Zumba, 5:30–6:30 pm Library Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 5–7 pm Town Hall call 672-0064; Stitch 'n Spin, 7:15–8:30 pm UCC ♦ Thursdays: Pilates, 8:30–9:30 am Library; Toddler Play Group, 10:30–11:30 am Library; Meditation, 4–5 pm call Debra 672-0229; Zumba, 5:30–6:30 pm Library; Mah Jongg, 7–9 pm Library call 672-6874; Adult Volleyball, 7–9 pm CCS gym ♦ Fridays: Yoga 8:30–10 am Library ♦ Sundays: Yoga 9–10:30 am Library; Meditation, 1 pm call Debra 672-0229				1	2	3 ♦ Snow Date Special P & Z Meeting 10 am Town Hall ♦ Hist. Soc. Open Saturdays thru 3/10 11 am–2 pm ♦ Winter Film Series 2 4 pm Library ♦ Artist's Reception-Bryan Nash Gill 6–8 pm Library ♦ Comm. Contra Dance 7 pm Town Hall
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	♦ Region One Bd. of Ed 6:30 pm HVRHS Library	♦ Inland Wetlands Agency 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall		♦ Community Conversation: Education 6:30–9 pm CCS ♦ Special BOF Meeting 7:30 pm Town Hall		♦ Cornwall Hobos' Reunion 4 pm Library ♦ Hevreh Ensemble Chamber Music 5 pm Souterrain
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
♦ Johan Winsser Author Presentation 1 pm Library		♦ Economic Development Comm. 9 am Town Hall ♦ West Cornwall Septic Comm. 5 pm WC Library ♦ P&Z 7 pm Library ♦ Housatonic River Commission 7:30 pm CCS	♦ Seniors' Valentine Lunch Noon Cornwall Inn	♦ Deadline: March Chronicle Copy NEW ♦ Cornwall Conservation Commission 7 pm Library ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm Town Hall	♦ Snow Date for Senior Valentine Lunch Noon	♦ Annual Jazz Dinner Dance 6–9 pm Library
18	19 PRESIDENTS' DAY	20	21	22	23	24
		♦ Deadline for Appeal of Real Estate Assessments ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	♦ CCS Board of Education 4:15 pm CCS	♦ Senior Trip CT Flower & Garden Show 9 am		♦ West Cornwall Winter Stroll ♦ Winter Hike w/ Naturalists 2–4 pm Trinity Retreat Center ♦ Winter Film Series All the King's Men 4 pm Library
25	26	27	28			
	♦ Zoning Board of Appeals 7 pm Library		♦ Region One ABC Committee 7 pm HVRHS Central Office			

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

At the peaks in 1964 and in 1998, the numbers were just over 200. The valleys were in 1984 (80 students) and in 2016 (72).

Regional districts were established during a period of growth. The structure of the regions and their rules of operation were not designed to cope with a period of school population decline and demographic change.

A good example of this is the state's minimum budget requirement, which forbids school districts from reducing education budgets more than 5 percent a year. This was intended to prevent cash-strapped districts from ransacking their schools—all well and good—but the requirement doesn't recognize that many districts in the state have had whopping great declines in student numbers. It has meant that teaching and non-certified staffs have been retained with few (or no) students to serve. How can the state permit towns to design solutions to declining student numbers that fit their singular circumstances?

The meeting attendees were divided into small groups to talk and to identify the most important educational, fiscal, and general issues involved in delivering a quality education for Cornwall's children given the current climate. The responses were legion but with Jonathan's help, the issues and concerns with the greatest consensus were sorted and ranked.

The educational issue of greatest importance to the group was quality education: one that was state of the art with up-to-date practices, had a solid foundation in the basics, and encouraged personalized learning projects. More importantly, it should include wide exposure to a broad range of experiences, such as the arts, civics, outdoor education, and community involvement. The second tier of consensus included how small class size impacts the range of social experience.

The main fiscal concerns raised by the group were as follows: education had to be affordable for the taxpayers; the cost per student was a concern, yet there needed to be an understanding that there is a base cost to running a school; and the lack of affordable housing contributes to the decline in population. The second tier of fiscal concerns included the exploration of multiple building uses; maintaining the building as a community asset; and working with another district or creating a regional middle school.

Under the topic of "general" issues, the main points of consensus were community involvement and the roots a school can provide. Attendees overwhelmingly agreed that students should be involved in their community, and community members should share their skills and talents with the school. It was equally felt that a local school provides a student roots in the community and that a school is where a

community creates its future. The second tier of concerns were: questioning what would it be like if there was no school in the town; could spaces in the school be used for other educational purposes, and again, what about affordable housing.

The second session on February 8 will look at data to support the points of consensus, and consider them more carefully. A third meeting on March 9 will sum it all up and decide what the town wants to do.

—Lisa Lansing and Annie Kosciusko

Not Just Skiing Anymore

Cornwall students have always been fortunate to learn to ski at Mohawk through the Skidaddle and upper grade ski programs. However, downhill skiing and snowboarding are only a couple of the winter sport options available to students. CCS students can choose to learn to cross-country ski, curl, snowshoe, and ice skate through the Alternative Winter Sports Program led by physical education teacher Aaron Boucher.

For years, CCS has had an alternative winter program for students who did not participate in the downhill ski and snowboarding program. Students would cross-country ski or hike, depending on the conditions, taking advantage of trails like Gold Road or the trail along the river by the Trinity Retreat Center. Before hitting the ski trails, kids would have a tutorial around the grounds of the school to become acquainted with the equipment and learn technique.

But in the last two years, Aaron Boucher has added curling and skating to provide kids with more outdoor activity skills. For curling and skating, the kids travel to the Norfolk Curling Club for one hour curling lessons and head to Hotchkiss for rink time. Principal Mike Croft has been known to come with the students to Hotchkiss and provide some skating lessons. Otherwise, students can enjoy their ice time as they please. According to Mr. Boucher, students and parents alike have been pleased with the additional offerings. When asked if the kids had a particular favorite sport, he said it depends on the kid.

Not only have the offerings changed, but scheduling has also been changed this year. In the past, students in first through third grades skied on Thursday with the Park and Recreation Skidaddle program and grades four to eight skied on Friday. Because class sizes are so small this year, the whole school will be heading to Mohawk or participating in the Alternative Winter Sports Program on Friday afternoons. All kindergartners will participate in the alternative program due to mutual concerns from Mohawk and



Welcome

Pierce Ryan Thompson to
Kristeena & Robert Thompson

Congratulations

Mary Ann Packard and Michael Joseph Pierce
Tai Marie Beers and Christen Charles Cilona

Goodbye to Friends

Ralph Gulliver, Jr.
Ronald K. Rapp
Amy V. Whitcomb

Land Transfers

Robinson B. Lacy and Karen Doebelin to Lincoln E. Frank and Margaret O'Neil Frank, 5 acres of land with buildings and improvements thereon at 26 Dudleytown Road and .244 acres on Dudleytown Road, for \$565,000.

Tabita Freimanis-Griffin and James Griffin to Andrew S. Peterson, 7.345 acres on Valley Road, for \$175,000.

Kevin Whitney, Administrator of the Estate of Lorraine P. Whitney to Duncan J. Bowie, land with buildings thereon at 44 River Road, for \$164,000.

Margaret D. Cooley, Alford W. Cooley and Susan Dalton Cooley to Cornwall Conservation Trust, 36.207 acres of land on Cherry Hill Road.

Leon E. Irish, Administrator of the Estate of Karla W. Simon to Karen Mullins, 50 percent interest in property at 6 Day Road and 4.17 acres of vacant land on Day Road, for \$267,500.

Leon E. Irish to Karen Mullins, 50 percent interest in property at 6 Day Road and 4.17 acres of vacant land on Day Road, for \$267,500.

Marta Wick, Executrix of the Estate of Alison Foss to Jessica L. Grioli and Thomas J. Garafano, land with improvements thereon at 166 Bunker Hill Road.

the school regarding five- and six-year olds participating in downhill ski lessons. With the addition of the kindergarten class, the total number of students in the alternative program is 14.

The first two Fridays of the program were canceled due to snow and rain, respectively. At this writing, the kids finally were able to head outside and practice the first skill of the season on fresh snow: snowshoeing. Students tried out the snowshoes by walking around the school property. Despite the cancellations of the first two weeks, Mr. Boucher hopes that the kids will get in all five planned sessions. —Mary Kate Kosciusko

Cornwall on Stage

Cornwall and its Foreign Mission School play a major role in a non-governmental drama being staged in our nation's capital this winter. *Sovereignty*, a play by Mary Kathryn Nagle, received its world premiere at the Arena Stage in January. Critical

scenes involve historical Cornwall figures like John Ridge, Sarah Northrup, and Elias Boudinot, and take place in Cornwall's Steward's House of the 1820s. Nagle also offers a subtly wrenching portrayal of the paradoxical impact of Cornwall's schooling—and of acculturation in general—on the fate of America's indigenous populations. The play runs until February 18 and is well worth an excursion.

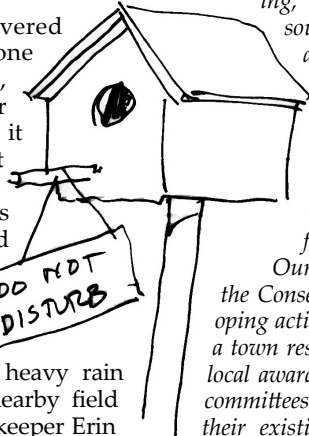
—Paul De Angelis

Cornwall Briefs

• **Breaking News:** The Covered Bridge will be closed for one month while it is being repaired, beginning the day after Labor Day, next September 3. Mark it down and don't say we didn't warn you.

• **Donkey Serenade:** The town's Animal Control Officer Brad Hedden came to the rescue of the donkey clan that lives in a shed/corral at the Trinity Retreat Center in West Cornwall. This, after a heavy rain early last month flooded a nearby field they use for grazing. Donkey keeper Erin Hedden summoned husband Brad who arrived with one of the snow-making pumps from the Mohawk Ski Area and managed somehow to rid the field of thousands of gallons of water. Result: grateful donkeys grazing again in their pasture.

• **Deer Rescue:** The CVFD rescued a year-old buck off a frozen Cream Hill Lake in late December. The deer slipped and fell on the ice, was unable to get his footing on the smooth ice, and struggled in place for hours. Department members donned their cold water rescue suits, secured themselves to others on shore, and gingerly made their way out to the deer. The ice held, the deer was roped and slid into shore. The animal was exhausted and stiff, but he eventually



GREENING NEWS

Cornwall is upping its game as the once "Greenest Town in CT" by participating in the new SustainableCT program. This program embraces all our past efforts and suggests a wider range of actions (beyond energy) to become sustainable, resilient, and a stronger community overall. There are eight categories: transportation, infrastructure, public services, planning, natural resources, economic development, housing, and cultural ecosystems. Resources are provided as well. It is administered by Eastern Connecticut State University's Center for Sustainability and was developed for towns by municipal leaders throughout the state as an expansion of the Clean Communities program, which has guided us from 2006 to November 2017.

Our Conservation Commission and the Conservation Trust are already developing actions. The selectmen are reviewing a town resolution and a plan to institute a local award. Other organizations and town committees will see relevance, can enhance their existing programs, and be inspired. Individuals can participate too! Please take a look at SustainableCT.org for full details.

For more info or to discuss ideas, contact me at 672-6010 or kfreygang@aol.com. I am active on the ESU planning team and the CT Sustainable Leadership Network.

—Katherine Freygang

LOOKING UP

While reading the estimable Cornwall Chronicle online this morning, I caught a strong whiff of optimism on its pages. This optimism buoyed me, because I had reluctantly begun to talk informally with people about selling my Yelping Hill property, where I have spent at least a part of every summer since 1948 when I was four.

I should have realized that the collective intelligence of the Cornwall community would not take our recent business decline lying down.

made his way back into the woods. Video can be found on YouTube.

• **Word is Out:** Steve O'Neil, the popular honcho of our town transfer station for the past 16 years, is retiring on March 5. This lovely man will be missed! Anyone interested in his position can apply by contacting the selectmen's office.

• **Edited Items:** (from January) Those two curators of the jams and chutneys at the West Cornwall Farm Market, Judy Herkimer and Joanne Wojtusiak, raised \$4,700 last year selling their goodies by shamefully luring potential customers with spoonfuls of their tasty jams. The money was donated through the UCC fund "ReMember" to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota toward building a home.

• **Last Month** we reported a bear break-in that destroyed the rear seat of Matt Collins's

With the closing of the Wandering Moose, I had decided that the logistics of having a summer place in West Cornwall had become just too difficult. After all, I am old enough to remember a thriving village whose businesses included two food markets (one of which doubled as a general store), a meat market (later a video store), several active restaurants, and a liquor store.

The incredible natural beauty of Cornwall and the exemplary nature of its residents have attracted summer people for generations. But just as year-round residents need jobs to survive, these summer people need commercial infrastructure to make their stays viable.

It now appears that Cornwall (and in particular, West Cornwall) is beginning to vigorously address these problems.

I could not be happier! —Ron Chester

HANDS OFF THE RIVERBANK!

We have lived opposite the meadow on Lower River Road in West Cornwall for 21 years. We are very lucky to live in one of the beauty spots of Cornwall, where residents and visitors come to play, picnic, and relax on the riverbank, and where fishermen, boaters, and tubers park for water activities. Every few years the area is threatened by the town with plans for improvement: first there was a ramp for disabled fishermen, followed by information kiosks, then self-composting toilets and recently a venue for the fractured farmers' market. Now we are told that a sewage plant needs to go there to improve local business. We are assured that it will look like a Shaker building and not smell or make a noise and that the filtered water that is dumped into the river will actually improve it (let's not forget the wisdom of GE please). The proposal is strongly supported by a group of people who do not live on the river and not supported by those that do. Why is this land regarded as something that needs to be fixed or improved, despite the fact that it's not even owned by the town? Eversource has chosen to leave it alone; we urge the town to do the same.

—Megan Wilson

automobile. We got it wrong. It was actually a car belonging to Trish Collins. Same family/different car!

—John Miller

Events & Announcements

Also: check our Facebook page for event reminders and Cornwall updates

Cornwall Woman's Society: Program and Meeting, Thursday, February 1, 10 A.M., at the Cornwall Library. Speaker Carol Lugar will talk about the history of Mohawk Mountain Ski Area from its founding by her parents in 1947 to today. Yes, artificial snow was invented at Mohawk, but there is much more to learn about Cornwall's skiing history. Refreshments to follow the presentation.

(continued on page 4)

CVFD Count

for December and January:

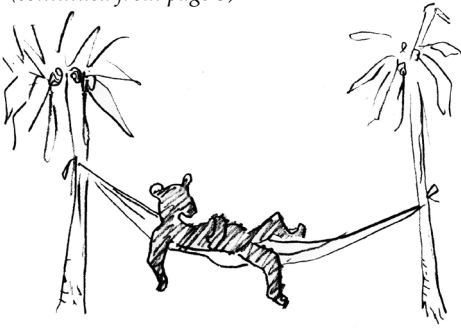
- 7 false alarms
- 10 motor vehicle accidents
- 4 mutual aid to neighboring towns
- 1 tree obstruction
- 1 smoke in the home from a malfunctioning furnace
- 1 ice rescue of a deer trapped on Cream Hill Lake
- 1 structure fire

Safety Tip of the Month

Know the signs of stroke and call 911 FAST—do not wait to see if these symptoms improve:

- F- facial droop
- A- arm drift
- S- slurred speech
- T- time is brain—every minute is critical to brain health and recovery.

(continued from page 3)



At the Cornwall Library

The Winter Film Series continues Saturday, February 3, with *Z* and Saturday, February 24, with *All the King's Men*. Films start at 4 P.M. Suggested donation of \$5 per person.

Cornwall Hobos' Reunion: What synchronous marvel brought three former hobos to settle in our little town? Under the disguise of respectability, Jerry Doolittle, Don Heiny, and Dick Sears discovered that each had hopped freight trains in their shadowy pasts. Join them for tales of ridin' the rails on sooty coal trains, new car carriers, wedged under the tires of a "fast pig," pacing in freezing boxcars and watching the glorious sunrise over Appalachia. Jerry, Don, and Dick will regale us with tales of action and adventure. Let's gather to the sound of classic train songs while enjoying BYOB and snacks to share. Witness the reunion on Saturday, February 10, 4 p.m.

Author talk: On Sunday, February 11, at 1 P.M., Johan Winsser will speak about the conflict between the Puritans and Quakers, and sign copies of his new book, *Mary and William Dyer: Quaker Light and Puritan Ambition in Early New England*.

Annual Jazz Dinner Dance: "Dancing Under the Stars" Saturday, February 17, from 6 to 9 P.M. with Bob Parker's Jive by Five. Please see insert for details.

Community Contra Dance: Don't be a groundhog, come out of your burrow and dance at the Community Contra Dance on Saturday, February 3, at town hall. Dancing will begin at 7 P.M. with the lively music

You're our Main Squeeze

Remember the candy hearts? Made by Necco in Cambridge Mass. Over the years they tried to update their messages. Once there was "Fax me." Our candy heart says "Where is the Love?" which, accompanied by a nice check, works for the *Chronicle*. Thanks!

by Still, the Homegrown Band and clear calling by Peter Stix. All ages and beginners welcome, no partner necessary. Donation requested to pay the caller. For more information call Jane at 672-6101 or go to motherhouse.us.

CCS Community Conversations: On Thursday, February 8, at 6:30 P.M. in the CCS gym, the "Community Conversations" about the future of education in Cornwall will continue. This second session of the series will build on the results from the first meeting where participants brainstormed the key educational, fiscal, and general concerns related to maintaining a commitment to quality education in the community. The goal of this second session is to analyze the generated findings from meeting one and work to define what the most important challenges are for moving forward and verifying them with data. Anyone unable to attend the first session is still welcome to attend the second.

"Cabin Fever" Concert: The Hevreh Ensemble, a musical group that performs "original world music that celebrates the diversity of many different cultures and religions," will be performing on Saturday, February 10, at 5 P.M. at the Souterrain Gallery at the Wish House in West Cornwall. Requested donation is \$40, and includes a wine reception. Please RSVP by February 5 to hevrehmusic@gmail.com or call 860-435-2144.

Art in Cornwall

At the Cornwall Library works by Bryan Nash Gill (1961–2013) will be shown from February 1 through March 17. An opening reception for Gill's "Reflections" will be held February 3, from 6 to 8 P.M.

In the Parish House, the exhibit of paintings by the late Cornwall artist Charles Besozzi ("Of Slavery and President Lincoln's Journey to End It") will continue until March 1. The exhibit may be viewed Monday through Friday, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M., Sunday, 10 A.M. to noon, and by appointment (860-960-3563).

Susan Hellmann's exhibit "Simply Cornwall" continues at the Souterrain Gallery through February.

The Toll House Gallery in West Cornwall continues to exhibit work of Donald Bracken, Lennart Swede Ahrstrom, and Scott Zuckerman in addition to the newly added collection by Susan Rand.

Valentine's Day Lunch: In place of the monthly senior lunch, Park and Rec. will

hold a Valentine's Day Lunch at the Cornwall Inn on Wednesday, February 14, at noon. The cost is \$15, and reservations must be made by February 7. Snow date is Friday, February 16.

Board of Assessment Appeals: Hearings will be held on real estate assessments dated October 2017. Applications to schedule a hearing are now available at the town clerk's office and applications must be received by the town clerk before February 20, 2018. Approved applicants will be contacted by the board to schedule hearings during March.

Connecticut Flower Show: Senior trip on Thursday, February 22, leaving the parish house at 9 A.M. Cost is \$16, lunch not included.

Winter Stroll Events: On Saturday, February 24, starting at 2 P.M. at the Trinity parking lot, Lower River Road in West Cornwall, the Cornwall Conservation Trust will lead a walk to discover signs of critter activity: tracking, winter homes, and river life. Who's out and who's still sleeping? Other activities are being planned for that afternoon as part of the second annual Winter Stroll, so check the West Cornwall Annual Stroll Facebook page for details.

The Republican Town Committee is updating its email list. Please email Kara Collins at kmjewel@gmail.com to be included.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE
cornwallchronicle.org

THIS MONTH

Tim Prentice, Illustrations
Annie Kosciusko and John Miller, Editors
Ben Gray Jr. and Caroline Kosciusko, Facebook Posts

NEXT MONTH

Tom Barrett and Bill Goulet, Editors
thomasgb@earthlink.net or wgoulet@optimum.net

MANAGING EDITOR Ruth Epstein

CALENDAR EDITOR Chris Gyorsok
calendar@cornwallchronicle.org

CIRCULATION Hunt Williams, Nan and John Bevans

DIRECTORS

Paul De Angelis, PRESIDENT
Annie Kosciusko, VICE PRESIDENT
Pam Longwell, SECRETARY
Tom Barrett, TREASURER

Jill Cutler • Audrey Ferman • Edward Ferman
Ann Gold • Erin Hedden • John Miller
Jonathan Landman • Lisa L. Simont
Tom and Margaret Bevans, FOUNDERS

THE CHRONICLE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

We hope you enjoy this on-line edition of the Cornwall Chronicle. Remember that all our revenues come from readers like you, and we need your help to continue producing this electronic edition along with the print edition. If your contribution is \$15 or more, we'd be glad to mail the print edition to any out-of-town address. Please mail your tax deductible gifts to: Cornwall Chronicle Inc. PO Box 6, West Cornwall, CT 06796. Comments, letters and news may be E-mailed to the publishers at: info@cornwallchronicle.org